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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

11 October 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Comments on [REDACTED]
Assessment of the Congo Situation

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1. On 28 September African specialists from O/NE,
OCI, and I met with [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]
year, to discuss his observations and conclusions about the situation in the Congo, particularly with respect to Katanga.

[REDACTED] who has also discussed his concern over the situation with various people on the policy side, is convinced that the Communist Bloc is now engaged in a well-organized clandestine operation to gain control of Katanga and its resources, utilizing the UN as an instrument with the aid of certain well-placed sympathizers, notably Michel Tombelaine, until recently the top UN Civilian representative in Katanga.

2. Reasoning that the Bloc's top priority objective in Africa at this stage is to disrupt the flow of raw materials

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most vital to West European industry, he concludes that Katanga, because of its importance as a source of copper, tin, and even more cobalt, and because of its proximity to Angola and the Rhodesian copper belt, is obviously a prime Soviet target. On the basis of the observations he and representatives of his firm have made in the Congo, he feels that various moves which the UN has made vis-a-vis Katanga are part of a Communist plan to gain control of Katanga. [REDACTED] feels strongly that central government control of Katanga would only serve Communist purposes, since it would probably lead to disruption of the economy and to nationalization of the mines, and that US interests would best be served by support of Tshombe, whom he considers a far more respectable figure than many reports would indicate.

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3. To mention only the highlights of his presentation,

[REDACTED] considers that Tombelaine, a French Marxist who "leaped" at the opportunity to get the Katanga UN assignment, has played the most important role in the Communist operation against the Katanga Government, first through systematic and sustained efforts to misrepresent Tshombe to the Western press and to his UN superiors, and secondly as the principal advocate

- 2 -

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SECRET

of the recent UN military offensive; although [] 25X1
had some inconclusive indications that General Cruise O'Brien
had displayed Communist leanings as a young man, he felt that
O'Brien had probably just followed the lead of the more experienced
Tombelaine in his actions and recommendations. [] 25X1
cited the failure of the UN to maintain the Elizabethville-
Port Franqui rail line, while insuring the continuation of rail
operations between Katanga and Oriental provinces, as evidence
of a plan to facilitate the invasion of Katanga by Gizengist
troops. He also cited indications that the Ethiopian and Gurka
troops encamped near Kabalo had been secretly preparing for
large-scale combat operations some weeks before the UN decision
to move in, noting that this was not consistent with the theory
that the UN had expected no opposition to its move.

Evaluation

25X1 4. [] have been in a position
to watch developments in the Congo from a point of special vantage
and we consider their factual reporting to be essentially accurate.
However, we believe that [] explanation of these events 25X1
as a part of a Communist master plan going back to the middle of
last year is not supported by other evidence we have.

- 3 -

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5. We assume that the Communists have been keenly aware from the outset of the Congo crisis, as has everyone else, of the economic and strategic importance of Katanga. For this reason, and because of the opportunity provided for depicting the Belgian and other white supporters of Tshombe as agents of imperialism, the USSR has consistently sought to bring down the separatist Katangan regime, with the ultimate hope of bringing Katanga under the control of a leftist -- oriented central government.

6. However, the USSR's path has been beset with difficulties, not only because of the opposition of the West and the independent course taken by Hammarskjold but also because of the volatility and unpredictability of Congolese politicians. Thus, by necessity if not by choice, the Soviets have used flexible and opportunistic tactics -- first supporting Lumumba, though he was far from an ideal "chosen vessel," then Gizenga, who also left much to be desired, and finally seeking to do what they could with an Adoula Government whose formation they had opposed. The Soviets almost certainly favored the UN's military move against Tshombe and presumably did all they could to put pressure on the UN and the Leopoldville Government to move in

- 4 -

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on Elizabethville. However, the operation was possible only because Hammarskjold and his associates, whom the Soviets so distrusted in virtually every other respect, had been deeply convinced from the outset, on grounds of their own, that reunification of Katanga with the rest of the Congo and elimination of undue Belgian influence there was essential to solution of the Congo problem.

7. In this connection, we believe that the role of Tombelaine should not be overrated. We agree with [REDACTED] about his unsavory qualities, as have some leading UN officials in the Congo; with some pressure from the US he is now being relieved of his assignment there. By misrepresenting the situation, Tombelaine may have persuaded the UN authorities to authorize more extreme measures in Katanga than they otherwise would have done and may have begun preparations for a military showdown before getting a go-ahead signal from headquarters; this may account for Hammarskjold's denial to Spaak shortly before the operation that military moves were in the offing. However, we do not believe that the operation took place without approval up the line, including that of Hammarskjold. Ample evidence exists that the Secretary-General and his chief advisors

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- 5 -

SECRET

chose the course of action they did for their own reasons, and, while they may have miscalculated the amount of resistance they would encounter, were willing to take the risks of abrupt unilateral action.

8. We have no other evidence on the continuation of operations on the Elizabethville-Port Franqui rail line by the UN or on the preparations by Ethiopian and Ghurka troops near Kabalo for combat operations. We have no reason to doubt [] re-
reporting on these points, but believe that, if correct, they reflect UN preparations for the use of force against Katanga, not Communist control of UN operations.

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9. In sum, we believe that [] has made some
useful observations on matters of fact, but that he has not produced evidence to support his thesis that UN operations in Katanga were essentially Communist-inspired. And though we agree with [] as to the potential dangers of a forcible reintegration of Katanga into the Congo, we are equally concerned that continuation of an independent Katanga regime will lead to new recrimination against the Belgians and the other supporters of Tshombe and to increased pressures on Adoula to take action, if necessary

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with Bloc and radical African support. As [] himself
indicated, our best hope is for some sort of compromise between
Elizabethville and Leopoldville -- and the sooner the better.

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- 7 -

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Approved For Release 2005/11/29 : CIA-RDP79R00904A000800010022-1

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